(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether his Ministry have set any target for generating more employment opportunities in Maharashtra State under this scheme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) and (b) The performance under the Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY) in Maharashtra was reviewed in March and May, 2004. During 2001-02 to 2003-04, against the target of 78,350 self-employment units, loans were disbursed to 52,394 self-employment units (provisional), with estimated employment generation for 78,591 persons in Maharashtra under this Yojana.

(c) and (d) Against the target of 22,800 self-employment units during 2003-04, the target under the PMRY for Maharashtra State during 2004-2005 is 39,000 units.

Preservation of fruits and vegetables

†1437. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bhabha Atomic Research Centre has developed a technique of long lasting preservation of fruits, vegetables and cereals; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Madam. The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) has developed and installed a plant using the irradiation technique for the preservation of fruits, vegetables and cereals.

The technological benefits that can be achieved by the radiation processing of food are as follows:

(i) Disinfestations of insect pests in stored products.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(ii) Inhibition of sprouting in tubers, bulbs and rhizomes.

(iii) Delay in ripening and ageing in fruits and vegetables.

(iv) Destruction of microbes responsible for food spoilage.

(v) Elimination of parasites and pathogens of public health importance in food.

Threat of National Security due to mining of mineral sands

1438. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any project is pending with Government to obtain permission for mining of mineral sands from the coastal areas of Kollam or from Alappuzha districts of Kerala State by any private or joint venture firms;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government see any threat on the national security to allow mining of minerals sands containing rare earths by private companies; and

(d) if so, Government reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Three applications received from the Government of Kerala for grant of mineral concessions for mineral sand in respect of M/s Kerala Rare Earths and Minerals Limited for three areas in villages Purakkad and Thrikunnapuzha, in Allapuzha district are pending with the Central Government.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Storage of radioactive wastes

1439. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that management and disposal of long-life radioactive wastes has been a technical and political problem world-over;